

CHAPTER 34

AN ACT establishing the Hunterdon–Somerset Flood Advisory Task Force.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. There is established the “Hunterdon–Somerset Flood Advisory Task Force.” The purpose of the task force shall be to review past flooding events within Hunterdon and Somerset counties from flooding of the Delaware River and the Raritan River and their respective tributaries, and recommend measures to reduce future impacts resulting from flooding on residents, businesses, and local government units in the Delaware River and Raritan River basins.

b. The task force shall seek to identify both short-term and long-term recommendations to enhance flood mitigation efforts and emergency response planning, and streamline requirements that may impede post-flooding recovery. The task force shall review the status and effectiveness of the emergency response plans for Hunterdon and Somerset counties and the municipalities located therein. In reviewing the circumstances surrounding flooding within Hunterdon and Somerset counties from the Delaware River and the Raritan River and their respective tributaries in recent years, the task force shall identify ways to minimize damage in the future, including consideration of the purchase of properties that have been damaged by storms or storm-related flooding, that appear likely to incur such damage, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage.

c. The task force shall call upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency and request the participation of a representative from that agency to serve on the task force, as a non-voting member, to provide information on the current status of flood mitigation efforts in the State.

d. In conducting its business, the task force may consider the “Report on Delaware River Flood Mitigation,” issued on August 22, 2006 by the New Jersey Flood Mitigation Task Force. The Hunterdon–Somerset Flood Advisory Task Force may also look at the efforts of the Passaic River Basin Flood Task Force and the Passaic River Basin Flood Advisory Commission to see if any of the research and recommendations concerning the Passaic River basin may be applicable to address issues within the Delaware River and Raritan River basins. The task force may also consult with experts in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission.

2. a. The task force shall consist of 11 members as follows:

- (1) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, or the commissioner’s designee;
 - (2) the Director of the State Office of Emergency Management in the Division of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety, or the director’s designee;
 - (3) two mayors who represent municipalities located in the Delaware River basin;
 - (4) two mayors who represent municipalities located in the Raritan River basin;
 - (5) one representative from the Hunterdon County Office of Emergency Management;
 - (6) one representative from the Somerset County Office of Emergency Management;
 - (7) one representative from the Millstone and Raritan Rivers Flood Control Commission;
- and
- (8) two members of the public who shall be individuals with relevant expertise in the areas of engineering, flood mitigation, public planning, environmental protection, or related issues.

b. The members set forth in paragraphs (3) through (8) of subsection a. of this section shall be appointed by the Governor within 30 days after the date of enactment of this act.

Any vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

c. The task force shall organize as soon as may be practicable after the appointment of its members, and shall select a chairperson from among its members and a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

d. The task force shall meet regularly as it may determine, and shall also meet at the call of the chairperson of the task force or a majority of the membership.

e. A majority of the membership of the task force shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of task force business. Action may be taken and motions and resolutions adopted by the task force at any meeting thereof by the affirmative vote of a majority of the membership of the task force in attendance at the meeting.

f. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available to the task force.

g. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of such employees of any State, county, or municipal department, authority, board, bureau, commission, agency as it may require and as may be available to it for the purpose of carrying out its duties under this act.

h. The Department of Environmental Protection shall provide primary staff support to the task force.

3. The task force shall prepare and submit a final report, including its findings, conclusions, and recommendations, to the Governor and the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), within one year after its organization. Copies of the report shall be posted on the Internet website of the Department of Environmental Protection, and printed copies of the report shall be provided to the public upon request and free of charge.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on the 30th day after the task force submits the final report required pursuant to section 3 of this act.

Approved August 31, 2016.